

GRAZING

Goals

Grazing Opportunities. Provide opportunities for the grazing of reindeer and other livestock on state lands.

Sustained Yield. Protect state rangelands by incorporating sustained yield concepts in grazing authorizations.

Management Guidelines for Reindeer and Other Livestock

A. Multiple Use Management of Lands with Grazing Potential. Lands with grazing potential shall be managed for multiple use, consistent with the land use allocations and management policies of this plan.

B. Public Access and Public Use of State Lands. Public access across and public use of lands under a grazing authorization may not be limited by the permittee.

C. Grazing On Important Habitat Lands. Grazing may be prohibited in certain habitats if DNR determines, in consultation with Alaska Department of Fish and Game, that impacts can not be mitigated through specific management guidelines. Examples of areas that may require consideration are areas of winter moose concentration, endangered species habitat, Dall sheep habitat, and areas of brown bear concentration.

D. Wildlife Conflicts. The state assumes no responsibility for loss of livestock to predators or wildlife conflicts.

E. Guidelines for Livestock Other Than Reindeer. The grazing of livestock other than reindeer will require a grazing operations plan and may require the development of range management plans, in accordance with guidelines established for grazing in the Copper River Basin Area Plan.

F. Other Guidelines Affecting Grazing. Several other guidelines may affect grazing. See the following sections of this chapter:

- Coordination and public notice
- Fish and wildlife habitat
- Forestry
- Heritage resources
- Lakeshore management
- Materials
- Public access
- Stream corridors and instream flow
- Subsistence activities and traditional uses
- Subsurface resources
- Trail management
- Transportation
- Wetlands management

Management Guidelines for Reindeer Grazing

A. Grazing Authorizations. A grazing authorization will be required to graze livestock on state land. Grazing authorizations may require a grazing operations plan. The permitting process will address specific concerns, such as disposal of slaughter waste. Public notice is required in accordance with *Coordination and Public Notice*, Guideline C, page 2-5, prior to issuing grazing authorizations.

The complex land ownership pattern in Northwest Alaska necessitates that reindeer herders negotiate with several land owners to receive an authorization for grazing. Cooperating land owners should develop a coordinated application process for reindeer grazing.

B. Grazing Operations Plan. The purpose of a grazing operations plan is to: 1) facilitate coordination between the herder and landowners and, 2) ensure that sustained yield principles are being applied to protect the state's rangelands.

To the extent practical, the development of a grazing operations plan for a grazing operation unit will be coordinated by the Alaska Soil and Water Conservation District through a cooperative agreement with the permit applicant and land owners and managers. Technical assistance can be provided by the USDA Soil Conservation Service. Grazing operation plans, as they pertain

to state land, are subject to approval by DNR, in consultation with affected agencies.

A grazing operations plan should include:

1. map(s) that show:
 - a. the location of the state permit area and non-state land to be used for grazing (and the ownership of this land),
 - b. the location(s) of existing or proposed improvements needed for herding operations (corrals and other temporary improvements), and
 - c. important wildlife habitat areas within the grazing area (these areas are to be identified in consultation with DF&G);
2. a description of the grazing system with a grazing schedule to be used for the entire operation unit, including state and any federal or private lands utilized, recognizing that each land manager may have different management goals;
3. initial stocking rate, determined by inter-agency standards;
4. a coordinated range utilization and range condition monitoring plan; and,
5. a list of measures to minimize conflicts with other land and water uses that DNR has determined are appropriate for the operating unit or portions thereof.

Modification of a grazing operations plan will be considered if new conditions or information indicates a significant change in the plan may be

necessary. To the extent feasible and prudent, the Alaska Soil and Water Conservation District will review the grazing operations plan, assess the need for any modifications, and recommend to DNR the actions necessary to meet the concerns. DNR shall determine if modification of a grazing operations plan is necessary, after consultation with the permittee and appropriate agencies.

Land Allocation Summary

Currently, 14 permits are issued for reindeer grazing in the NWAP area, mostly on the Seward Peninsula. With the exception of a few small areas, permits cover all of the land on the Seward Peninsula, approximately 15 million acres. Twelve of the 14 permits involve state land (approximately 5 million acres). Permits for grazing activities on state land do not transfer any interest in state land to the permittee.

State lands will continue to be available for reindeer grazing. Reindeer grazing may take place whenever compatible with the primary uses of the area. Permits may be issued until grazing operation plans are developed for long-term authorizations.

Grazing of livestock other than reindeer on state lands has not occurred in recent years, and is not expected to increase. Similar procedures to reindeer grazing are required if grazing of other livestock is requested. Additional guidelines may be required for livestock other than reindeer, such as examination for disease or parasites before approval for release.